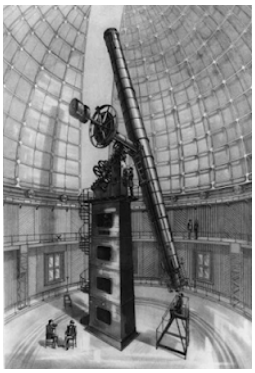
UCLA Faculty Association

News and opinion from Dan Mitchell since 2009

Monday, January 19, 2026

TMT?



Every once in awhile, we go looking for news about the Thirty-Meter Telescope project on Hawaii in which UC is involved. The last yours truly could find out about it indicated that the governor of Hawaii, hoping to overcome opposition that stalled the project, indicated last November that he would support building it on the sites where past telescopes which have been decommissioned and removed once were. But that approach, too, provoked opposition.

There is an alternative plan to move the project from Hawaii, where nothing happens, to the Canary Islands (Spain). Spain has offered to put some funding into it. Local environment groups there, however, have complained.

Given federal government cuts for such research, it isn't clear that even if an unopposed location were found, there would be sufficient money to build the TMT. The UC Regents have not paid much attention to TMT for a long time, although it sometimes comes up in public comments. It is not on their agenda for their meetings this week.

See: https://www.civilbeat.org/2025/11/thirty-meter-telescope-planners-consider-other-sites-on-mauna-kea/; https://www.cbc.ca/radio/quirks/bobs-blog-thirty-meter-telescope-9.6996441; https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2025/12/16/spotlight-now-gov-green-hawaiis-economy-immigration-enforcement/.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: politics, UC, UC Regents

Straws in the Wind - Part 227

From Inside Higher Ed: *Clemson University has agreed to rescind the termination of Joshua Bregy, an assistant professor in the department of environmental engineering and earth*

The Council of UC Faculty Associations

- Fight for the Future of Higher Education: Academic Freedom from the Classroom to the Clinic
- Our Concerns Over Revisions to APMs 15 and 16
- Fight for the Future of Higher Ed Town Hall
- Letter from AAUP to UC Objecting to Trellix
- Judge rules Trump demands of UCLA must be made public

Remaking the University

- Minneapolis Lessons for Higher Education - 1/31/2026
- Achieving Our University - 1/20/2026
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- California Faculty Association (NEA)
- UC-AFT

Topics

sciences, nearly four months after dismissing him for resharing a post on his personal Facebook page that criticized the late conservative commentator Charlie Kirk. Bregy sued after he was terminated on Sept. 26, claiming that his firing violated his First Amendment rights.

As part of the settlement, Bregy will receive pay and benefits "throughout the original term of his employment," the ACLU of South Carolina, which represented Bregy, said in a news release. In addition, Clemson provost Robert Jones agreed to "provide positive letters of recommendation to potential employers based on Dr. Bregy's classroom teaching." For Bregy's part, he agreed to drop his lawsuit and resign from his position at Clemson effective May 15, 2026. He will not have any teaching, research or other faculty obligations through the spring semester, according to the release...

Full story at https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2026/01/13/clemson-settles-professor-fired-kirk-comments.

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From the Brown Daily Herald: *All [Brown] University owned and occupied buildings equipped with card readers will require Brown ID swipe access as the spring semester begins, Interim Vice President of Public Safety Hugh Clements and Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration Sarah Latham announced in a Friday email to the Brown community. Beginning Jan. 20, buildings with classrooms will require card swipe access between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m., but "building-specific accessibility will vary beyond these hours to accommodate student organization activities, events, meetings and other programming," the email reads. Buildings offering "shared campus services" will remain accessible to all community members with a Brown ID during standard business hours.*

The University has already implemented security enhancements in Barus and Holley, the Engineering Research Center and the Lassonde Innovation and Design Hub, such as placing cameras at all entrances and exits and installing door alarms to signal propped doors. Brown public safety officers will continue to provide security in these spaces as classes begin, according to the email...

Full story at https://www.browndailyherald.com/article/2026/01/brown-enforces-id-swipe-access-for-equipped-buildings-enhances-security-as-spring-semester-begins.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: academic freedom, Brown University, Clemson U, politics

And things roll along without a Master Plan

UC President Clark Kerr hands Master Plan to Gov. Pat Brown

As blog readers will know, yours truly periodically points to the need for a new Master Plan for Higher Education to allocate scarce resources and responsibilities among the three segments: UC, CSU, and the community colleges. Absent a Master Plan, however, things roll along on an *ad hoc* basis. Blog readers will also know that last week, proposals for various community colleges to offer (yet more) 4-year degrees were discussed. From EdSource:

California community college officials [last] Tuesday urged approval of proposed bachelor's degree programs that have been blocked, in some cases for years, by California State University. The degrees were discussed at length during a meeting of the California Community Colleges system's 17-member Board of Governors in Sacramento. State law allows community colleges to create bachelor's degrees as long as the programs don't duplicate what's offered by the state's four-year universities.

Fifty-four bachelor's degrees are currently offered or will be soon at community colleges across the state. Most were approved in 2022 or later. Sixteen other proposed degrees that have been approved locally are still awaiting final sign-off from the state because of objections from CSU campuses. Many local community college leaders and students have grown frustrated by the delays. Seven of those degrees were initially proposed in 2023. No action was taken on Tuesday, but several board members said they support approving the degrees. That sentiment was echoed by many students, faculty and local college officials during a long public comment period...

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Straws in the Wind - Part 236 (Compact 2.0)

Former UCLA Law Dean Named Head of Columbia

Final decisions on the degrees are up to the president of the board of governors, who can approve them at the recommendation of the chancellor... Some campuses expect approvals as soon as this month...

The blocked degrees include cybersecurity technology at Cerro Coso Community College, field ironworker supervision at Cerritos College, cybersecurity and network operations at Moorpark College, cloud computing at Santa Monica College, and building trades management at Foothill College, among others...

Full story at https://edsource.org/2026/community-college-officials-urge-approval-of-blocked-bachelors-degrees/748883.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:10 AM No comments:

Labels: community colleges, CSU, Master Plan, UC

Sunday, January 18, 2026

UC Should Cash the Check Quickly

The Legislative Analyst's Office - LAO - has provided a (critical) review of the governor's recent budget proposal for 2026-27 [excerpt]:

...In the budget summary and presentation, the Governor and administration officials have acknowledged the downside risk to the state's revenue picture. For example, in the budget summary, the administration points out that:

(1) much of the revenue surge is attributable to investor enthusiasm around artificial intelligence,

(2) history suggests these gains are not sustainable, and

(3) the dominant risk to the budget is the stock market and asset price declines.

…But Governor Proposes No Material Actions to Address Downside Risk...

Full review at https://lao.ca.gov/reports/2026/5101/2026-27_Budget_Overview_011226.pdf.

As we noted in our posting on the budget proposal, it is basically focused on avoiding problems for now and getting the governor to the end of his term without having to take drastic measures. His successor, whoever that turns out to be, will have to clean up, if that proves to be necessary, and the governor will be able to pursue his presidential ambitions and say it didn't happen on his watch.

Note that the governor deviated from his past practice and left it to his finance director to handle the news conference at which the budget proposal was unveiled. He thus avoided the kind of nasty questions that the LAO has asked. Reporters did ask the finance director questions about budget sustainability, but the answer was we plan to look at such unpleasant matters in the May Revise.

Yours truly would advise UC to cash the check as quickly as possible.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: governor, LAO, State Budget, UC budget crisis

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No Retroactive Pension Payments for Delayed Filings

From Inside Higher Ed: *The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board officially launched its Office of the Ombudsman website... providing a portal where students and members of the public can file complaints against the state's public colleges and universities. The new office was mandated by Senate Bill 37, legislation that went into effect Jan. 1, which increases state control over public higher education by giving governing boards authority over curriculum, faculty governance and hiring and requiring academic program reviews. It also established the ombudsman's office to manage complaints and investigations into alleged violations of the state's DEI ban or of the other provisions of SB 37.*

In October, Gov. Greg Abbott appointed Brandon Simmons as ombudsman. Simmons is a former tech company executive, corporate attorney and venture capitalist who previously served on the Texas Southern Board of Regents and as an entrepreneurial resident and distinguished professor of business at Wiley University in Marshall.

"Through a user-friendly website and engagement on campuses across Texas, I look forward to a collaborative, productive partnership with our institutional leaders and students," Simmons said in a statement. "Texas leads the nation with top-ranked, rapidly ascending universities, and our office is here to support these great institutions in serving the next generation of Texas students." ...

Full story at https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2026/01/12/texas-launches-portal-public-complaints-against-colleges.

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From the NY Times: *The head of the board overseeing the University of Virginia and two other top board members, including a major donor to the school, resigned on Friday under pressure from the state's incoming Democratic governor, according to two people briefed on the matter and letters obtained by The New York Times. The resignations came after the new governor, Abigail Spanberger, asked at least five members of the board to step aside as she takes office on Saturday.*

...There are 17 seats on the Board of Visitors, which oversees the school, but before the resignations on Friday, there were only 12 members, all appointed by the outgoing governor, Glenn Youngkin, a Republican. At least two other members of the board were asked to resign but so far have resisted. It is unclear if Ms. Spanberger has asked the rest of the board members to resign.

The turmoil at the university over its board is the latest fallout to rock the school since the Trump administration began a pressure campaign against it earlier this year. Last summer, the school's president, Jim Ryan, resigned amid pressure from the Trump administration, which was threatening to cut the school's funding and investigate it if Mr. Ryan remained in office.

Conservative alumni and members of the Justice Department under President Trump had wanted Mr. Ryan out because they believed he was too liberal. It's unclear what impact the resignations will have on the recently appointed president of the school, Scott C. Beardsley. Some Virginia Democrats and school faculty members have been calling on Ms. Spanberger to have Mr. Beardsley removed, saying that he was too hastily appointed by a board that refused to stand up to Mr. Trump...

Full story at https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/16/us/uva-resignations-abigail-spanberger.html.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: academic freedom, politics, Texas Southern U, U of Virginia, Wiley U

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Union Negotiation News

From the LA Times: *Graduate student workers are making an unusual request in their contract negotiations with the University of California: a legal fund to help them navigate visa issues. The ask from United Auto Workers Local 4811, which represents 48,000 teaching assistants, postdocs and researchers at UC, comes amid increased scrutiny of international students by the Trump administration, which has ramped up restrictions on immigrants and foreign visitors...* ***They've been negotiating with the university for months over a new contract; the current one expires Jan. 31.****

...In addition to [a] $750,000 legal fund, they're asking the university to continue paying researchers who are temporarily stranded outside the U.S. due to visa issues, and reimburse them for visa-related fees. The University of California also spends about $3 million per year on legal services for immigrant students through its Immigrant Legal Services Center...

Full story at https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2026-01-13/union-asks-uc-for-legal-aid-fund-for-international-graduate-students.

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*Note that if the expiration date passes before a new contract is reached, there won't necessarily be a strike. A strike decision would be the union's call at that point or later. According to the Daily Bruin, a strike vote will be taken Feb. 5-13 - which means no strike until at least the vote is tabulated. (Such votes typically result in strike authorization.) Even if a strike is authorized, however, one may or may not occur.
See https://dailybruin.com/2026/01/12/unions-representing-40k-academic-research-uc-employees-announce-strike-vote.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:10 AM No comments:

Labels: diversity, strikes, UCLA

Saturday, January 17, 2026

I Never Promised You a Rose Bowl? - Part 8

From Pasadena Now: *The Rose Bowl Operating Co. and the city of Pasadena state in new court papers that the UC Regents have no basis for seeking to compel arbitration of their lawsuit alleging that UCLA is wrongfully exploring options for a new home football venue, specifically SoFi Stadium in Inglewood. In court papers filed... with Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Joseph Lipner, the RBOC and the city contend that the regents are focusing on an alternative dispute resolution provision of the agreement that is "deliberately and particularly narrow" and does not take into consideration the contract as a whole.*

Taken together, these provisions reflect an ADR [alternative dispute resolution] mechanism that clearly and expressly is not applicable to an attempted termination that threatens hundreds of millions of dollars in public investment and long-term municipal revenue," the RBOC/city attorneys state in their court papers. The provision instead is limited to expeditiously resolving routine, curable performance disputes, according to the RBOC/city lawyers' court papers...

Full story at https://pasadenanow.com/main/rose-bowl-operating-committee-pasadena-respond-to-uc-arbitration-bid.

Note that even if this matter does wind up in arbitration, it is likely that an arbitrator would still award big bucks in damages to get out of a contract that lasts until 2044.

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Contributors

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Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: athletics, UCLA

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